

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 9, 2002

Honorable Sonny Callahan, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Energy and Water Development
2362 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-6020

Honorable Peter J. Visclosky, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Energy and Water Development
2362 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-6020

Dear Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member:

Your support is respectfully requested in eliminating funding for the Robust Nuclear Earth Penetrator (RNEP) and limiting funding for activities to enhance or accelerate the current nuclear test readiness posture.

The administration is asking for \$15.5 million for a Phase 6.2/6.2A study of the RNEP to destroy hardened and deeply buried targets such as chemical and biological weapons caches. We believe that conventional weapons are better suited to this task because they avoid key logistical and political impediments to use that a nuclear weapon would face. Conventional weapons can destroy some underground facilities, or could collapse exits, seal off air vents, and destroy communications ports from more deeply buried targets, and better conventional penetrators and combined effects weapons for this purpose are currently under development. Moreover, nations on the target list could counter conventional or nuclear earth penetrators by deeper burial or by misleading U.S. intelligence as to the location and characteristics of these facilities. The RNEP would inevitably result in the atmospheric dispersal of radiation that would jeopardize our forces in the field, as well as noncombatants in the vicinity, requiring additional protection such as radiation protection suits and decontamination showers, and posing a health risk. Use of RNEPs or any other tactical nuclear weapons would thus slow down rather than enhance progress on the battlefield.

We are concerned that even developing and testing a new tactical nuclear weapon would have disastrous security consequences. A nuclear weapon designed for battlefield use would increase the perceptions that nuclear weapons were as usable as any other part of the arsenal and that the United States was preparing to use them. If the United States proceeds with these weapons, other nations with far less conventional capability will surely seek to deter a U.S. attack by developing their own weapons of mass destruction, most likely biological weapons. These weapons would place U.S. forces at risk and could be used against the U.S. homeland, as we saw on a small scale last October. Proceeding with RNEPs would also undermine the global nonproliferation regime. The obvious targets for these weapons are nonnuclear weapon states that, as it happens, are party to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT). Yet the United States and other nuclear weapon states pledged in 1995, as an inducement for nonnuclear weapon states party to the NPT to agree to extend the NPT indefinitely, not to use nuclear weapons against them (with certain exceptions). Therefore, development of new nuclear weapon capabilities designed for deeply buried and hardened targets would undermine the credibility and value of these 'negative security assurances'. In sum, the RNEPs may offer marginal military benefits at best while imposing major costs and risks. Therefore, we respectfully request that the funding for this program be eliminated.

We are also concerned about the unintended consequences of the accelerated test readiness program proposed in this budget. The administration publicly supports a continued test moratorium, yet is requesting an additional \$15 million for an enhanced test readiness study and related activities that would reduce the 24-36 month period of time between the Presidential decision to conduct an underground nuclear test explosion and the test itself. We are concerned that the proposed enhanced test readiness program will renew interest in testing among other nations. In January 2002, the head of the Russia Defense Ministry's nuclear directorate flatly stated, "if any of the five countries officially possessing nuclear weapons starts testing nuclear munitions again, and we consider our nuclear stockpile to be in a critical state, we too will carry out nuclear tests."

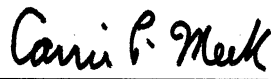
The resumption of underground nuclear testing by other nations is not in the best interests of the United States, especially as we seek to maintain our partnerships in the global war on terrorism, yet we will be in a poor position to dissuade other nations if we move toward resumption of our own testing program. Moreover, this enhanced test readiness program is being proposed in the absence of a specific identifiable problem with the safety or reliability of the nation's nuclear stockpile. Therefore, we respectfully request that the increase in funding sought specifically for the acceleration of testing be removed from the budget or reallocated toward domestic counter-terrorism efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

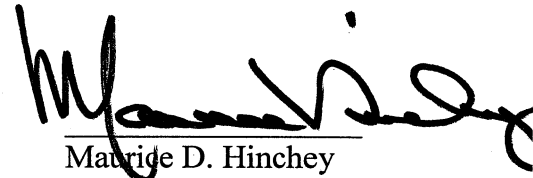
Sincerely,



Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



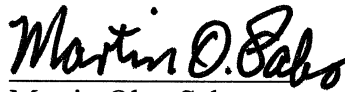
Carrie Meek
Member of Congress



Marjorie D. Hinchey
Member of Congress



Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



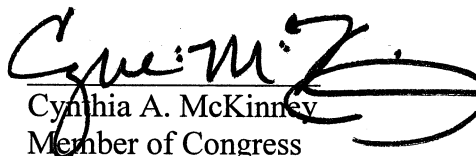
Martin Olav Sabo
Member of Congress



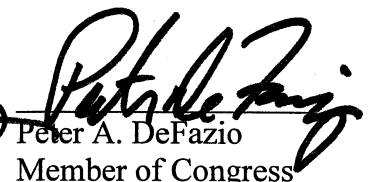
Barney Frank
Member of Congress



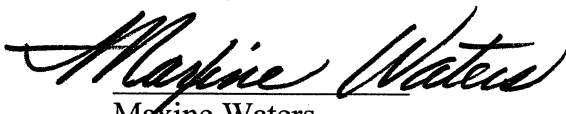
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Cynthia A. McKinney
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
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Bob Filner
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Barbara Lee
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Tammy Baldwin
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Betty McCollum
Betty McCollum
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John E. Baldacci
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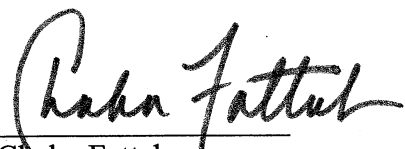
Neil Abercrombie
Neil Abercrombie
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Tom Allen
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Lois Capps
Lois Capps
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Danny K. Davis
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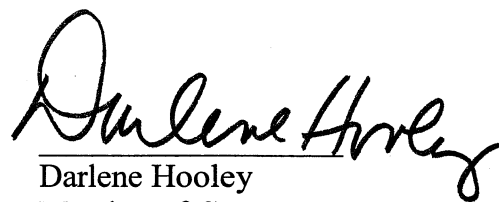
Eni F.H. Faleomavaega
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Member of Congress



Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



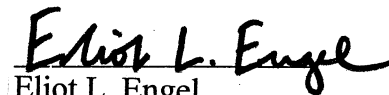
Darlene Hooley
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Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



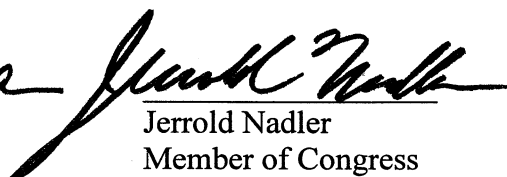
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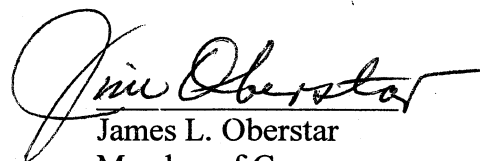
Eliot L. Engel
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Constance A. Morella
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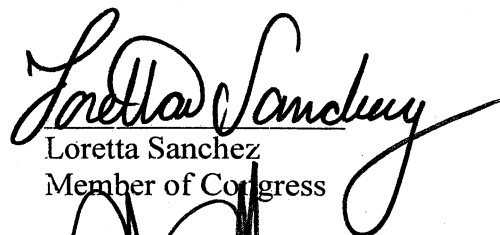
James L. Oberstar
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Charles B. Rangel
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Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



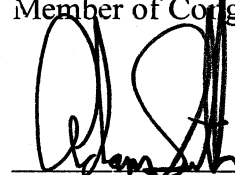
Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress



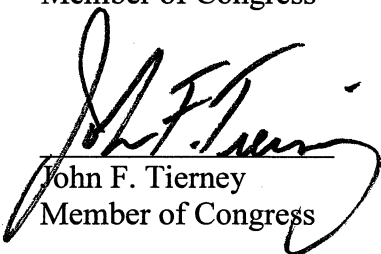
Bernard Sanders
Member of Congress



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress



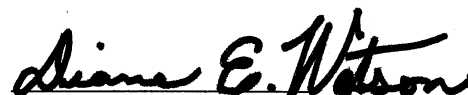
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



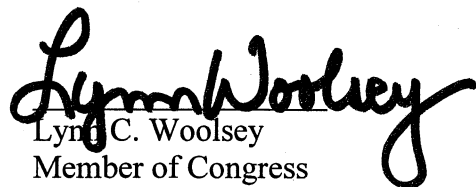
John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



Mark Udall
Member of Congress



Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress



Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress



Robert E. Andrews
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